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Paul's Three Missionary Journeys.

"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Acts 9: 15, 16.

Paul was one of the most remarkable men that ever lived. He had all the elements of a great character. He possessed a burning zeal, unflinching perseverance, inflexible will, fixedness of purpose, decided convictions, unbounded enthusiasm, self-reliance, and genius of the highest order. He had all the endowments of a great leader. These very qualities, when arrayed against christianity, made him a no mean opponent. When converted to the cause of Christ, they made him one of the most influential and successful advocates of the christian religion. As a persecutor of the church, he was sincere, earnest, uncompromising and laborious. When he became a christian, we see these elements conspicuous in his character and conduct. He was unselfish and self-sacrificing. He was not a hypocrite. There was no duplicity in his conduct. His religion was no pretence. We discover perfect sincerity and an unquestioning faith throughout his whole ministry. "We believe, therefore we speak." He had an ardent love for Christ and his cause, yet he was no enthusiast. He could say, in justification of the zeal of himself and his co-laborers, "For the love of Christ constraineth us. Because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead. And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again."

He had the most implicit faith in the gospel. The truths of christianity were not dim shadows, but actual verities, and he consecrated all powers of his being for their defence and promotion. Great men are not needed on all occasions. Some one has said, "God does not need many tall cedars in his forest." America needed only one Washington, and God raised him up and qualified him for his work. All this and more was emphatically true of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. As God had a special design in the conversion of Paul, so he had in the training and preparation for his mission in the church. He was a chosen vessel when but a youth, while he was studying at school in his native city, Tarsus. His Greek training and Greek culture prepared him to grapple in after times with the subtleties of Stoic and Epicurean philosophers. His training under the far-famed Gamaliel made him master of the Jewish polity, Jewish theology, and Old Testament teaching. When converted to christianity, he was enabled by his profound erudition in the Old Testament Scriptures, to discover the true relation between the Mosaic economy and the Christian dispensation, as is clearly demonstrated in that master treatise entitled the Epistle to the Hebrews.

As a chosen vessel to carry the gospel to the Gentiles, he performed his mission, not seeking personal ease or aggrandizement. He was not above working at tent-making at Corinth and elsewhere. He inured himself to hardship, making journeys on foot through sandy deserts, over hills and valleys, across swollen streams, exposed to summer's burning heat and winter's icy cold. He did not shrink from dangers. He was often exposed to perils in the wilderness, perils by land and sea, perils from robbers, and perils from false brethren. No sinister motive could be impugned to him, for he coveted no man's silver or gold. As a missionary, he was a model for every missionary who should come after him. We turn now to our subject:

I. PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

The first regular mission for the conversion of the Gentiles was organized at Antioch. The church at this important city on the Orontes was destined to share with the church at Jerusalem the honor of sending out missionaries to preach the gospel in the regions beyond. It is somewhat remarkable that this city was the starting point of each of Paul's three missionary journeys. The mission enterprise conceived and put into operation by the church at Antioch was not quixotic or romantic in its origin. It had the sanction and command of the Holy

Ghost. "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Paul and Barnabas unto the work whereunto I have called them." There was a special conviction of duty that influenced those men of God in giving themselves to the work assigned them. On the other hand, the church was convinced of her duty in the premises, and hence by prayer and fasting and laying on of hands set Barnabas and Paul apart for the work.

Paul with his companion set out on his first missionary tour about A. D. 45. Sailing down the Orontes, they came to Seleucia, the seaport of Antioch, named after one of the generals of Alexander the Great. Hence they sailed to Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean Sea, lying almost due south from Seleucia. Landing at Salamis in the southeast of the island, they preached the word of the Lord in the synagogue of the Jews. Here it may be remarked that Paul and his co-laborers in their missionary journeys always availed themselves of the privileges of the synagogues. The Jews of the dispersion had their places of worship in every city, where they dwelt in sufficient numbers and enjoyed the protection of the Roman government.

Leaving Salamis and traveling west to Paphos at the western extremity of the island, the two apostles met with their first opposition. It was from Elymas the sorcerer who sought to turn away from the faith the deputy Sergius Paulus. He was smitten with blindness by Paul. This miracle doubtless profoundly impressed the devotees of heathenism at Paphos where a magnificent temple, dedicated to Jupiter, existed at the time of Paul's visit. This man is but a specimen of all who deal in the black art. They have always opposed the gospel. Superstition, sorcery and necromancy can not stand the full blaze of gospel light.

The missionary party having left Paphos and sailing a little northwest across the sea of Pamphilia, reach Perga on the coast of Pamphilia. Here we have the first intimation that John Mark, a nephew of Barnabas, had accompanied the apostles on their missionary tour. We are informed that at Perga he left them and departed for Jerusalem. Perhaps he grew weary in the work, or became discouraged as we sometimes become in our times. This was the ground of Paul's refusing to take him in the second missionary journey.

Leaving Perga and going due north into the interior, they came to Antioch in Pisidia. Here on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and Paul, by invitation, addressed the assembly. How gladly he embraced every opportunity to preach Christ and him crucified. We have a synopsis of this remarkable sermon recorded in Acts 14th chapter. Paul preached again the next Sabbath, as his preceding sermon had greatly moved his hearers.

But another enemy appears on the stage, destined to follow him up, mar his success, and even endanger his life. The apostles having expressed a preference for the Gentiles as hearers, served still further to exasperate the Jews. This bigoted race stirred up the people against Paul and Barnabas, and compelled them to leave. They shook off the dust of their feet against them and came to Iconium. Here they remained sometime preaching the gospel with success, the Jews in the meantime opposing them and finally succeeded in their expulsion from the city.

They next came to Derbe and Lystra, cities of Lycania. At Lystra, Paul healed a cripple, whereupon the priests of Jupiter prepared to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas. This was prevented with difficulty. Here Paul does not hesitate to antagonize boldly heathenism. There is no compromise of truth—no policy seeking—no hunting popularity at the expense of truth, duty and consistency, but a firm, decided stand for the right. The fickle populace come and go. They vacillate from one extreme to another. Awhile ago they took Paul and Barnabas to be gods, but now, influenced by the Jews, they take them for devils or impostors, and stone Paul, leaving him half dead. After his recovery, he and Barnabas came to Derbe. They now think of returning to Antioch. A few days after this, they pass again through Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia, ordaining elders in every city and confirming the churches that had been established.

Thus we gather that they had abundant success, notwithstanding the violence of their enemies. And so the gospel faithfully preached will be crowned with success. This successful yet trying journey was but the harbinger of success in many a missionary tour undertaken since that day. From Antioch in Pisidia the missionaries travel to Pamphilia and come to Perga and thence to Attalia on the sea coast where they took shipping, and having sailed to Antioch, reported to the church by which they had been recommended to the grace of God. What was the nature of this report we can only conjecture. Thus ends the first missionary journey.

II. PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

The first missionary journey lasted about two years. It was about ten years later before the second was undertaken. During this interval the celebrated council, referred to in Acts 15th chapter, was held at Jerusalem. The decrees of this council were made known by the apostles and missionaries sent in the regions around. It was perhaps a short time after their return from the council, that Paul proposed to Barnabas to visit again every city and place they had gone in their first journey and see how the brethren

were doing. During the ten years which had elapsed, these feeble churches had contended with much opposition, persecution, declension, and defection. They might well represent the condition of some newly constituted churches on heathen soil at this day. Paul knew what they had to contend with, hence his solicitude. Perhaps some of the feeble bands had become extinct, others were scattered abroad, and many of the young disciples had gone back to the beggarly elements of the world. A difficulty occurs just as they are about to set out. Barnabas wished to take Mark with them, but Paul was violently opposed to this. Hence, Barnabas, having separated from Paul, took Mark and sailed to Cyprus and the history of the missionary operations closes at this juncture.

Paul took Silas as his companion and co-laborer and departed being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God. They travel by land up through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches. Tarsus, Paul's native city, lay in his route, but we are not informed of his visiting it. His parents were perhaps dead, and in all probability most of his relatives were dead. He had a married sister living at Jerusalem. A prophet, however, is not without honor save in his own country, among his own people and his own kin. Be this as it may, Paul's zeal for his Master's cause transcends all love of home and kindred. He wishes to save souls and hence hurries on, regardless of social enjoyments and love of pleasure, across the mountains to Derbe and Lystra, that he may see the faces of his brethren once more and know how they stand.

At Lystra, Timothy whom Paul afterwards called his own son in the gospel and to whom he writes his last epistle, was ordained to the christian ministry. Afterwards extending their journey, they preached the gospel throughout Galatia and Phrygia and planted churches in those regions. To the churches in Galatia, Paul afterwards wrote the Epistle to the Galatians. Passing through Mysia, they came down to Troas on the sea-coast. From this place they essayed to go into Asia and Bythina, but the Holy Ghost suffered them not. Here a vision of a man in Macedonia, crying, "Come over and help us," was seen by Paul and Silas. Convinced that it was their duty to cross the sea and preach the gospel in a new continent, they took ship and sailed for Philippi, a seaport on the river Strymon. The first fruits of their ministry here were the healing of the soothsaying damsel, the conversion of Lydia and her household and the jailer and his household. These were the original elements of the Philippian church to whom Paul afterwards wrote an epistle. Persecution awaited them also in this journey, for at Philippi Paul and Silas were cruelly beaten and cast into the dungeon. But they rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer for shame for the name of Jesus.

Upon their release, they left the city, journeying along the northern coasts of the Aegean sea. Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, one of the most important cities in northwest Greece. Here entering the synagogue, they reasoned with the people three Sabbath days in succession from the Scripture and succeeded in forming a church to which his first two epistles, I and II Thessalonians, were written. Being driven by their common enemy, the Jews, from the city, they go by night—sent by the brethren—unto Berea, where the people were more noble than those at Thessalonica, inasmuch as they search the Scriptures to see whether the things spoken by Paul were so or not. But the Jews of Thessalonica came hither, stirred up the people so that the brethren sent Paul away to go as it were by sea, but Silas and Timothy abode there still. Paul's journey was now due south, down the coast of the Aegean sea as far as Athens, whither he was brought by the brethren. Here he was surrounded by Grecian idolatry, the statues of gods and heroes being seen on every hand. It was a city of thirty thousand gods. The satirist Juvenal said in derision of Athens that it was more easy to find a god there than a man. Here on Mars Hill he encounters the Stoics and Epicureans, the philosophers of the times, and discourses with them on the christian doctrine of a resurrection from the dead, a doctrine received by some but rejected by the many. A few only were converted to the cause of truth and righteousness, among whom was Dyonisius, the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris.

Leaving Athens and going west, they cross the gulph of Corinth to Corinth, the largest, wealthiest, the most pleasure-loving and corrupt city of all Greece. Here was the famous temple of Venus, the goddess who was supposed to preside over that licentious city. Paul labored here a year and a half and succeeded in establishing a flourishing and vigorous church, to whom he afterwards wrote two of his principal epistles. Leaving Corinth in company with Aquila and Priscilla, they cross the Aegean sea almost due east to Ephesus, a famous city in Asia Minor. Here the party tarried only a short time, Paul having in the mean time preached in the Jewish synagogue. The missionary party now leave Ephesus, going southeast across the sea to Cesarea and then up the coast to Antioch from whence they had set out. The apostles proceeded from Cesarea to Jerusalem and from Jerusalem to Antioch.

III. THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

Paul departed from Antioch, went through

Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening the disciples; then he turned due west and passing through Asia as before, came to Ephesus where he labored two years, a longer time than he spent at any other city during his missionary tour. Here he was eminently successful, a flourishing church was established to which he addressed the Epistle to the Ephesians. Ephesus, at that time, was the most celebrated city in the east. Here was the celebrated temple dedicated to Diana. To this city the inhabitants of all parts of Western Asia resorted and from all parts of the civilized world. The people of Northern Africa and Southern Europe visited it. And all were eager to purchase silver shrines of Diana. Hence, the making of silver shrines was a profitable business at Ephesus, until the preaching of Paul turned the people away from idolatry. Here exorcising evil spirits and various other dark arts were practiced. But such was the influence of the gospel that large numbers, who followed such business, brought their books and burnt them. Demetrius and his co-laborers in the same business of making silver shrines, seeing their craft in danger from Paul's influence, set the whole city in an uproar and stirred up the people against Paul. After the disturbance had been quieted, the Apostle went into Macedonia, visiting perhaps Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and other places in Greece, then came to Corinth where he remained a short time, again retracing his steps, traveling up the west coast of the Aegean sea, and then due west to Philippi, from which place he sailed across the sea to Troas. At this latter place he preached until a late hour at night and broke bread with his disciples. Here he restored to life Eutychus who, during a deep sleep, had fallen from the third story and been killed. Leaving Troas and going south, touching at Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Samos, and Trogyllium, he came to Miletus where he had that tender and touching interview with the elders of the Ephesian church, whose faces he was destined to see no more. He then leaves for Jerusalem, passing by Coos, Rhodes and Patara, and taking another ship at Phenice, he and his party sailed to Tyre, and from Tyre to Ptolemais, and thence to Cesarea, where he spent a short time with Philip the Evangelist, and then went to Jerusalem where he was arrested, and, after several years' imprisonment, sent to Rome to appear before Nero. After his release, he may have visited Spain and Italy. On his second trial before Nero, he was beheaded, having written just before to his beloved Timothy.

Paul stands before the christian world as the model missionary. R. W. Farnham, Va.

What Many Christians Need.

The man who is empty himself cannot fill others. The professed christian who can hardly stand up on his feet is not likely to do much effective work in his Master's vineyard. How can the poor brother who is trying to keep his farthing candle from being blown out, how can he so "shine as to glorify God," and be an illuminator to guide other people to the Saviour? Such feeble, grasping christians may count on a church roll, but they count very little anywhere else. There is but one cure for this spiritual emptiness. It is not to attend more prayer-meetings or hear more preaching, for putting sermons into some souls is like pouring water into a sieve. What such empty souls need is a fresh inpouring of the Spirit of Christ.

(1) Those who really want this and seek aright for it, can have it; and one mark will be an increase of faith. The disciples asked for such an increase, and so may we. A feeble faith may move a mole hill, but it cannot stir a mountain. It can say "perhaps God may hear, or perhaps I can do some good, or perhaps I may get out of the quagmire of doubt and debility." Now faith is just the taking in of Christ into the soul, and the more of Christ the more strength. To grapple with "stubborn sins," to conquer debilitating doubts, to carry a heavy load, to take hold of "hard cases" and try to bring them to Christ, to do all such feats is given to those who are filled with might in the inner man. Luther spent three hours a day in prayer that he might have the stamina for his wrestle with the giant on "the seven hills." Charles G. Finney tells us in his autobiography how he was once pleading with God to remove the difficulties that obstructed his path, until he says that "his flesh trembled on his bones and he shook from head to foot." Then there came a full tide of assurance into his soul, a "great lifting up," and a sweet calm of entire trust; from that room he went forth into one of the most powerful revivals that he ever witnessed, and the whole town of A— was moved by his preaching. Spurgeon used to give an account of a blunt and earnest minister—somewhat of the same fibre as John McNeill—who was sent into a desperately irreligious region. He called together the people, and in his first sermon he said: "Look here, my friends, you may wriggle and twist and set yourselves against this gospel as much as you like, but before this time twelve-month hundreds of souls will be converted here. I have asked this of the Lord, and he has given it to me." Spurgeon says that the sturdy faith of this bold man of prayer received its reward, and within the year there were several hundreds of hopeful conversions. The pastor who believably asks for such a rich harvest this year, and seeks his gospel seed in prayer, will not come into the Lord's barn with an

empty wagon. Let the Sunday-school teacher pin this promise into her class book: "All things are possible to him that believeth."

(2) With increase of faith will come an increase of spiritual vigor. When I found that a tree in my yard bore more blossoms than fruit, I had the gardener dig around it, and put a bushel or two of fertilizer to reach its roots, and the next July it was crimsoned on every limb with cherries. The more abundant life in the tree yielded the more abundant fruit. The simple reason why any christian does not yield the fruits of the Spirit is the lack of inward vigor. The soil of his soul has become impoverished. He needs the tillage of prayer, honest self-examination, the subsiding of repentance and a new inpouring of the Spirit of Christ. "If a man abide in Me, he shall bring forth much fruit."

It is the debilitated folks who catch all the fevers that are going, and a physician can do little for a patient who has not vitality enough to slough off the disease. An immense proportion of all our church members are in the hospitals, or off on furlough, or too feeble to carry a weapon. Their disease is a low vitality, and some are dying of "heart failure." The only recovery of all these pitiable invalids must come from the tonic which Jesus Christ gives when he gives his quickening Spirit. There is really no such thing as a genuine revival for a christian or for a church except by a living again of Christ in their souls, and a living again for Christ in their daily conduct. Listen, O ye invalids and impotent folk and idlers, to this trumpet-call of the Master: "I am come that he might have life, and that ye may have it more abundantly!"

(3) With this increased vigor of heart-life will come more genuine joy. There is no sunshine for those who will keep their shutters barred. Joy is not gained by the asking for it, but only by the acting for it; we have got to walk with Christ if we want to walk in the sunshine. There is a miserable lot of moping and grumbling and soured christians who disgrace the name they bear. If one of this sorry regiment should ask a shrewd man of the world to embrace christianity, he might well reply: "No, I thank you, I have troubles enough now without being troubled with such a peevish and doleful religion as yours seems to be." What a letter of recommendation some christians carry in their cheerful countenances! What a brace of joyous prisoners were those two apostles who sang their duet down in Philippi's dungeon at midnight! Those early christians managed to draw oil out of the flintiest rocks, and the black waves of persecution phosphoresced with the sparkles of bright joy. They were filled with Christ, and so their joy was brimming over. Now here are three things which thousands of those who call themselves christians need; and these three things—more faith, more vigor, and more joy—are all within your reach. Your Lord and Saviour offers to you them all when he offers to you an "abundant life." Are you ready to let him bestow in his own way and on his own terms? Then it is yours!—T. L. Cuyler, D. D.

Conversions in Olden Times.

Some things have changed. Conversion in the time of Jesus, the Author of our glorious religion, was not a mental exercise or an intellectual process. It was changing one's way of living, dropping a style of conduct and taking up another style, in imitation of another man who lived that other style. Conversion, to-day, is a series of mental exercises which are supposed to ultimate in a better mode of acting. In the olden times the mode of acting preceded the mental exercises. The man, to-day, feels so and so, or thinks he does, and therefore does so and so. We have got the cart ahead of the horse. We look for happy feelings before we have done that righteousness which alone can bring happiness of mind. The joy of the Lord is only known to those who live the life of the Lord in its goodness.—Don Mac, in Young People's Union.

When and What to Read.

If you are impatient, sit down quietly and have a talk with Job.
If you are just a little strong headed, go to see Moses.
If you are getting weak-kneed, take a look at Elijah.
If there is no song in your heart, listen to David.
If you are a policy man, read Daniel.
If you are getting sordid, spend a while with Isaiah.
If you feel chilly, get the beloved disciple to put his arms around you.
If your faith is below par, read Paul.
If you are getting lazy, watch James.
If you are losing sight of the future, climb up to Revelation and get a glimpse of the promised land.—Golden Censer.

Religion is a necessary and indispensable element in any great human character. There is no living without it. Religion is the tie that connects man with his Creator and him to his throne. If that tie be all sundered, all broken, he floats away a worthless atom in the universe, his passions attractions all gone, his destiny abandoned, and his whole future nothing but darkness, desolation and death.—Webster.